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SUBJECT: UN SECURITY COUNCIL FEBRUARY 24 THEMATIC DEBATE
ON DRUG TRAFFICKING

¶1. This is an action request. USUN may draw from the statement in paragraph 2 for the UN Security Council thematic debate on Drug Trafficking in West Africa on February 24. End action request.

¶2. Begin Statement:

Thank you, Mr. President.

The United States would like to thank France for its leadership in drawing attention to the increasing threat to international peace and security posed by transnational organized crime and drug trafficking. We also appreciate the update from Executive Director Costa. His briefing today indicates the seriousness of the threats we face, and we look forward to his continued collaboration with the Council.

Mr. President, international observers, including the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, have calculated that transnational organized crime and corruption may siphon up to 15% of the world's gross domestic product, undermining key global industries and markets, and distorting the benefits of trade and commerce. The scourge of drugs and drug trafficking undermine political stability and the rule of law. Illegal drugs waste lives and devastate families, schools, and communities. They overload our prisons, strain our law enforcement sectors, and tax our public health system.

But this organized crime has taken on a new dimension. Links between drug trafficking and terrorist and insurgent groups are well-documented and further endanger stability and economic development. Criminal syndicates support terrorist groups by facilitating their clandestine trans-border movements, weapons smuggling, and forging of documents.

At the same time, terrorist groups employ organized criminal activity as a means of self-financing, including extortion and drug dealing, as well as modern offenses such as credit card fraud and insurance scams. Such growing terrorist-criminal cooperation is of particular concern to all of us. This interdependence makes it much more difficult to prevent terrorist financing.

As terrorist groups increasingly mimic the tactics of organized crime, our international response needs to incorporate more of the tools used by traditional law enforcement. The United States is working with international partners to identify and dismantle these linkages wherever they exist, and to promote the comprehensive reforms to criminal justice and law enforcement institutions necessary for long-term prevention.

Mr. President, the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime - the Palermo Convention and the UN Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) - created a new global template for international law enforcement cooperation. They - along with the three UN conventions against illegal drugs - form the backbone of a common multilateral framework for protecting our publics against the threats of crime, drugs and corruption.

Unfortunately, in the years since the Conventions were adopted, criminal networks have taken advantage of high technology tools such as the internet and electronic financial transactions, increased cross-border commercial activity, and globalization to expand internationally. This type of criminal activity is harder to trace and prevent, particularly when applied in less developed or post-conflict regions. We must work together to strengthen and make better use of the tools the Conventions provide us, and halt the destabilizing effect of transnational crime.

Mr. President, allow me to emphasize the commitment of the United States to these widespread problems by outlining our efforts to help governments take responsibility as equal partners in this struggle to disrupt organized crime and other destabilizing groups. For 2010, the Department of State has allocated approximately \$2 billion on priority programs to support three inter-related objectives:

- Institutionalize the rule of law by developing and expanding criminal justice systems to strengthen partner country law enforcement and judicial effectiveness, foster cooperation in legal affairs, and advance respect for human rights;

- Disrupt the overseas production and trafficking of illicit drugs through targeted counternarcotics and institution-building assistance and coordination with foreign nations and international organizations; and

- Minimize the impact of transnational crime and criminal networks on the United States and others through enhanced international cooperation and foreign assistance.

Mr. President, one of the key components of the Palermo Convention is the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children. The trafficking of persons tears at a community's social fabric.

During economic crises, persons desperate for work are especially vulnerable to the threats posed by trafficking organizations. We must show continued and sustained efforts to counter this threat and to protect its victims. It is not enough to simply pass a trafficking law or announce a national plan of action; we must act globally to actually implement trafficking laws, and ensure that these laws assist victims while prosecuting traffickers, in order to help end this form of modern slavery.

The United States is working to build the capacity of foreign law enforcement agencies to combat complex transnational crimes such as trafficking-in-persons and migrant smuggling so that they are able to assist in multinational efforts to disrupt the global networks of transnational criminal organizations.

As noted in our statement during the December session, these transnational issues often have an impact on the security of post-conflict states, where criminal justice sectors may have been destroyed or even hijacked by criminal organizations. Such regions can be breeding grounds for drug traffickers, terrorists, and other bad actors, who can undermine reconstruction efforts and threaten the security of neighboring states. We believe that the Security Council should take these issues into consideration, as appropriate, when creating or reviewing mandates for peacekeeping operations. Likewise, the Council should consider actions under relevant sanctions resolutions, as appropriate, to help counteract the impact of such transnational threats.

In conclusion, Mr. President, let me highlight the contributions of international and regional organizations to the fight against transnational organized crime and drug trafficking. Notably, the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) is a critical partner for providing states with the necessary assistance to implement not only the Palermo Convention, but also the UN Convention Against Corruption and the drug control treaties. We also applaud UNODC's focus on

providing member states with legislative and technical assistance and national capacity-building to counteract illicit drugs, crime and terrorism, as part of its overall strategic plan. From 2008 through 2009, the United States provided approximately \$36 million to support UNODC activities, and we are committed to continuing that support. The contributions and efforts of UNODC and other international and regional organizations act as a force multiplier and complement the work of bilateral programs.

Thank you, Mr. President.
CLINTON